A Research Proposal

EXPLORATION OF THE INDIGENOUS CULTURE AND TRADITION AMONG THE ANGAMI NAGAS IN THE WORKS OF EASTERINE KIRE

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ABSTRACT:

"There cannot be *is* without *where"*. (Barker, 2016)

A community or People are the product of geographical conditions where they inhabit either by choice or by migration and the cycle of seasons and the natural resources along with animals, birds, trees and flora and fauna are integral to the existence of a community or a people. The reciprocal relationship of man and landscape bring out a culture which further contribute to 'living and loving' (Dai, 2006) and collective consciousness, resulting in or validating myths, legends, customs, traditions, beliefs, rites and rituals, food habits, shelter; out of which a religion, an identity, or a way of living remarkably comes forth for their representation and existence and continues for generations, though to some extent in changing or distorted mode.

1. INTRODUCTION

Culture is a wider concept and subject to change which covers all affairs of human beings in all corners of the world. Mostly, in general discussion or in non-academia, culture is directly understood as equal to *civilized* way of living of specific group of people or community, stating difference that rural, dalit, tribal and other not considered so called *civilized* are not cultured. That has made marginalized sections of people inferior and insecure while living in the society as citizens though the Constitution of India doesn't make any such difference or apply hierarchical measures. In the case of tribal people, they seem to be ignored, let it be participation, resources, infrastructure, education and mainstream engagement in all walks of life.

But cultural study focusses on all identities which underline their differential socio-cultural engagement from other cultures in their day-to-day life, with no sense of hierarchy or

domination, or good and bad. Cultural studies dig out their knowledge base, experiences, values, beliefs, attitudes, religions, spatial relations, codes and symbols of sharing meaning and communication which make them an identity reflecting in their festivals, marriages and community engagement. Barker writes in *An Introduction to Cultural Studies* (2016), "Cultural studies does not speak with one voice, it cannot be spoken with one voice, and we do not have one voice with which to represent it." (p.4)

The word *Culture* is derived from the German word *Kulture* meaning *growing*. In social anthropology the term culture stands for human knowledge which is learnt or acquired, but is not inherent or innate. English scholar Sir Edward B Tylor was pioneer in developing cultural anthropology and he defines "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." (1871, p.1)

The proposed research intends to explore the indigenous culture and tradition among the Angami Nagas, a tribe inhabiting in the state of Nagaland in the Northeast India, with reference to and interpretation of the works of Easterine Kire, in tune with the theoretical approach of Cultural Studies. Focus of the study will comprise the socio-historical background of the tribe, the oral narratives of the community which feature their myths and legends with their animism and conduct of life situated and shaped in the eco-cultural habitat, the socio-cultural fabric of the tribe which depicts individual's position in the family, women's status, community role and function among the Nagas, based on the Angami Naga characters, family systems, their relations in the family and the society and their making of a community, and how colonization, Christianity, education, urbanization and government policies etc. brought a change in the Naga indigenous culture and tradition.

The emergence of *English novel* can be dated back to the beginning of eighteenth century during the Industrial revolution, though the glimpses can be traced back in 612 BC in

The Epic of Gilgamesh, the world's oldest literature. This popular genre after the decline of romance and drama captured the spirit of middle class, their experiences, their follies and foibles in England. The Britanica Encyclopaedia mentions that this prose narrative encompasses an extensive range of types and styles: picaresque, epistolary, Gothic, romantic, realist, historical. In later development it seems to have widened its range of expressions not only by subject matter, but in the writings of other countries and other languages signifying the voice of subaltern studies, tribal literature, Dalit literature which have revolutionised the thought process reflecting their anguish and sentiments, appealing for their rights, demolition of caste system, equal status, freedom of expression and economic progress and equality.

The history of novel as a genre in Indian writings dates back in the nineteenth century, where, it marks, the colonial education introduced by the British Rule, and the sense of civilized life and modernity 'by reformist impulses' (Anjaria, 2015) hovering around had captured the attention of 'indigenous elite'. (ibid) This obligation resulted in so called movement known as 'progressive writing'(ibid) in the early twentieth century which lasted until the early decades of postcolonial writings, focussed in the service of and by the spirit of nationalism.

Regarded as the first Indian novel in English, *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864) by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (1838-94), 'anticipates some of the major developments of the novel as a genre'(ibid). Further, Mulk Raj Anand (1905-2004), R. K. Narayan ((1906-2001), and Raja Rao (1908-2006) mark their intellectual and creative influence in Indian literature, without which history of Indian literature cannot be had. Anand's *Untouchable* (1935), Narayan's *Swami and Friends* (1935) and Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938) and other novels of similar significance and repute of this trinity are the masterpieces and socio-cultural documents depicting Indian society in particular and Indianness in general.

Chronicled as postcolonial writings, the direction of novel as a genre took a new shape with myriad choices of thematic concern along with India as an Independent landscape and

India as a representation and treatment by the West. This trended a wide reach into the Indian society in general and a socio-cultural trajectory in particular. As a result, along with the mainstream writings of elite and urban literature, Dalit literature, Tribal literature, and Feminist writings invited the attention of academicians, research scholars and the budding writers in India and such sections of marginalized literature continued to adding the lived experiences of the ignored section or strata of the Indian society, following their cultural past intersecting and interacting to the cultural present, flaring up identity crisis and revival of their past treasure of the society.

India is a treasure of diversified cultures, languages, castes, and religions and is widely celebrated and identified for this mosaic land of beauty and harmony. Indian cultures have interwoven all the glorified diversities blending for the peace and prosperity for the ages though there have been several complexities, upheaval, historical ruling and attacks and issues of exploitations and marginality. Gertrude Emerson Sen writes in *The Cultural Unity of India* *"*the secret of Indian society lies in its wonderful capacity to tolerate different views, different customs, different levels of understanding." (1956, p.12)

Dr. Nityananda Patnaik, a reputed anthropologist born in 1927 and educated from Calcutta University, classified Indian races and their cultures into four sections as cited below:

1. The Austroasiatics represented by the Kols, the Mundas. the Bhils. the Santals, the Birhors, the Khasis, and Nicobarese etc.
2. The Mongoloid people represented by the Nagas, the Bodos, the Kuki-chins etc.
3. The Dravidians represented by Malers, the Oraons, the Gonds and the Khonds.
4. The Aryans who are supposed to be the last to come to India.

Emergence of Tribal Literature in South Asian and African Countries portrays the two sides of tribal people in which how they are deprived and untouched from the modern world and resources like education, their representation in various walks of life, and how they are

exploited, targeted and harassed, and on the other how their indigenous cultures are unique which define their identity. Major tribes in India are the Bhil, Gond, Ho, Khond, Mina, Munda, Naga, Oraon and Santhal who reside in different states of India. L. P. Vidyarthi & B. K. Rai aptly write in *The Tribal Culture in India* "Their history cannot be traced exactly and the historical anthropology which includes popular beliefs, legends, myths, tales, short history of the locality, etc. of the folk people can help us to know about the unrecorded past" (1985, p.30)

The Shilong consultation of tribals in 1962 explained the term *tribe* as "an indigenous, homogenous unit, speaking a common language, claiming a common ancestry living in a particular geographical area, backward in technology, pre-literate, loyally observing social and political customs based on kinship." (Religion and Society 9:80).

According to D N Majumdar, another anthropologist of repute, *A tribe is a collection of families, bearing a common name, members to which occupy the same territory, speak the same language and observe certain taboos regarding marriage profession or occupation and have developed a well assessed system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligation.*

The origin of the word *tribe* seems to be originated in the Latin word *tribus* which meant groups in society by the Romans. As the civilization progressed, the word *tribe* has been connotated as uncivilized people who live in the forests and jungles, at the foothill or mountains and who manage their livelihood in their indigenous way. Hence, the term *tribe* has been derogatory in use. But the anthropologists, sociologists and government administrative officers came in contact with the tribals in India and they showcased their cultural identity. Their documents, surveys, literatures and other writings clearly reflect the life of the tribal people the way they lived and were made to live. Similarly, the central and state government machinery have focused their attention to the tribal belts for their progress and celebration of indigenous

way of life by establishing corporation and organizing *haat* or *mahotsav* for their handicrafts, food items, dress, songs and dances.

To mention, tribes in Bastar district in the state of Chhattisgarh have their unique identity and the market for their articles, arts, painting and handicrafts are popular in the region and in India as well. They are widely known for their colourful and fascinating festivals, arts and crafts. *Bastar Dussehra* is a vibrant and major festival of the tribes inhabiting in the region. *Solung* is the most popular festival of Adi tribe in Arunachal Pradesh and the celebration marks all the rituals, observance and cultural extravaganza in the region. To mention the major festivals of Naga tribe are *Hornbill* and *Secrenyi* festivals which represent their authenticity, purity and symbolical amalgamation of Nature with their rituals and rites.

To know about the tribal people and their culture systematically and seriously, we largely depend on the anthropological studies done in India by foreign and then Indian anthropologists. With the formation of Asiatic Society of Bengal by William Jones in 1784, the study of anthropology started in India. Foreign anthropologist like J. P. Mills, J. H. Hutton, Verrier Elwin and C. F. Haimendorf are considered pioneers in tribal studies in India. In its progressive knowledge about tribal groups and their existence, Indian anthropologist like L. P. Vidyarthi, K. P. Chattopadhyay, S. C. Roy, T. C. Sharma, B. M. Das and many others provide us an inclusive, specified and keen understanding of tribal culture and their issues of identity.

African and South Asian writers like Chinua Achebe, Nadine Gordimer, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Wole Soyinka, Ben Okri, and Chimamanda Ngozi Aichie, to name a few, have focussed their attention on the subaltern writings and reflected an inhuman tendency towards the marginalised society – Dalit, Tribals, Women and Negros. These writers have brought forth how these people live and what they expect from their fellow citizens either of their country or the world where they have settled or migrated. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) is a classic piece depicting the plight of his tribe. Women tribal writers from India as Susheela Samad

belonging to Munda tribe, Alice Ekka from Munda tribe, Jacinta Kerketta from Oraon tribe, Usha Kiran from Gond tribe and Temsula Ao from Naga tribe have penned the voices of resistance and resilience and cultures of tribals in regional languages and in English.

Arun Joshi's *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1971), Gopinath Mohanty's *Paraja* (1987), Romen Basu's *Black Stone* (1989) and Gita Mehta's *A River Sutra* (1993) to name a few meted out the cultural treatment to the tribal people representing their unique ways of living, their beliefs, their culture and tradition on the one hand and their exploitations by the government machinery, contractors and moneylenders on the other, followed by the literatures of Northeast India, in which a body of young writers from eight-sister states of the region started voicing for their socio-cultural fabric, oral narratives and eco-cultural habitat on the one hand and against the excruciating pain they were-are experiencing due to political and military interventions and perennial insurgencies in the region on the other. Their voices of human values of universal appeal and their existential habitat of identity were ignored, violated, and perverted. Young writers from the region, after their formal education and the treatment they had while studying in different parts of the country, developed an impulse of creative writing to talk about their people, history, indigenous culture and tradition and finally their appeal to be identified and to be treated to be equal among all equals and the obligation ignited them to have a body of literature in the region popularly known as literature from the Northeast India, though myriad narratives and collective separateness. Their writings, in a sense, project and document historical determinism or literary sociology, for their oral narratives catered them a thought of preserving, preaching and promoting their cultural treasure of ecological habitat in their literary works and their appeal for identity and message of who they are to the rest of India and the world have been their telling concern throughout their literary engagement. There have been violent situations between the military and the people due to ethnic tensions, insurgencies and corruptions. It's worth to mention that such military interventions and

continuous ethnic strife have traumatised the people from the region and paralysed the socio-cultural fabric and spirit of living. Religious conversion into Christianity, urbanization and trending education have changed them completely and no doubt all these changes are welcome to them, but their nostalgic anguish for the restoration of their past is a matter of trouble and they want cultural fulfilment or bliss through their literature, art and culture, cuisines, and festivals.

Writers like Mamang Dai from Arunachal Pradesh, Dhruba Hazarika, Navkanta Barua, Mitra Phukan and Aruni Kashyap from Assam, Robin S. Ngangom, and Rajkumar Bhubonsana from Manipur, Desmond Kharmawphlang and Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih from Meghalaya, Mona Zote and Cherrie L. Chhangte from Mizoram, Temsula Ao, Easterine Iralu and Easterine Kire from Nagaland to name a few of repute have represented their regional and cultural diversity, identity, ecosystem, their anguish, anxiety and anticipation in their poetry, short stories and novels.

Born in 1959 in Kohima, Nagaland, Easterine Kire is one of the sensitive writers of repute from Northeast India. Her works as poet and translator are also immense. She has devoted and dedicated her life in portraying the life, culture and tradition of Angami Nagas through her writings as she is closely connected with the struggles of her people. Kire has been a pioneer in manifesting the wonderful and vibrant cultures of Naga tribe to the world through her writings and she considers if not she who will write about her people and culture. She is very much serious and passionate to preserve and enhance her mother tongue, *Tenyidie*. Her collection of 200 oral poems in the language proves her determination, vison and literary venture on the one hand and her concern to cherish the treasure of her community's past on the other. She diligently intends to report the world *who we are, how we are and where we are* and her writings clearly bring out an understanding of cultural memory – a memory of integrity and a memory of identity. Lived experiences of her Angami Naga tribe foreground strong feelings

for their cultural and social identiy in her novels which beautifully weave the oral narratives of animism, ethnicity, race, myth and legends combined as cultural memory, historical memory and personal memory.

Kire's Sky Is My Father: A Naga Village Remembered (2003) is the first novel written by a Naga writer in English. Later Kire continued her writings which include *A Terrible Matriarchy (2007), Mari (2010), Bitter Wormwood (2011), When the River Sleeps (2014), Son of the Thundercloud (2016), Don't Run My Love (2017), Walking the Roadless Road: Exploring the Tribes of Nagaland (2019), a respectable woman (2019), and articles and essays.* Her works have been translated in many languages as well and she is an awardee of several prizes and has got recognitions and appreciations for her exuberant works. Paul Pimomo writes "Easterine Kire is the keeper of her people's memory, their griot. She is a master of the unadorned language that moves because of the power of its evocative simplicity."

Easterine Kire's first novel *Sky Is My Father* (2003) originally published *A Naga Village Remembered* is the winner of the Hindu Prize. It is the first novel written in English by a Naga writer. It speaks about the legendary battle between Britain and the little warrior village of Khonoma in the nineteenth century. Prakruti Maniar in her book review states that the novel opens with a meeting among the men of the village to discuss settling an old score with another village, and seeking revenge and the clan wars that punctuated their life. From this moment, we are introduced to key and secondary characters, customs of birth and death, an impending feast, Sekrenyi, for the new year, and several details that paint the picture of a day in the village. The canvas is prepared.

A Terrible Matriarchy published in 2007, in the words of Dhviti Vora, revolves around the main theme of women oppression or patriarchy. But it is the obvious glances of double- standard oppression that catches the reader's attention. Dielieno is not only suppressed by the patriarchal society but also by her grandmother Vibano's biased

behaviour. This institutionalized patriarchy makes women the victim of their own exploitation. Women oppression can also be seen in the form of socio-economic discrimination. The males-only heir system bars the women from inheriting land or money. This leads to the importance of male children over female children in the Angami society of Nagaland. It is one of the main reasons as to why grandmother treats Dielieno as the 'errand-girl' whereas cherishes her brothers, especially Leto (who absolutely loved Dielieno) unconditionally. The grandmother had faced a similar situation as a child and she irrevocably does the same to her granddaughter.

Published in 2011, *Bitter Wormwood* by Kire, in the note of Zubaan publisher, "traces the story of one man's life, from 1937 to the present day. The small incidents of Mose's childhood, his family, the routines and rituals of traditional village life paint an evocative picture of a peaceful way of life, now long-vanished. The coming of radio into Mose's family's house marks the beginning of the changes that would connect them to the wider world. They learn of partition, independence, a land called America. Mose and his friends become involved in the Naga struggle for independence, and are caught in a maelstrom of violence that ends up ripping their community apart. The herb, bitter wormwood, was traditionally believed to keep bad spirits away. For the Nagas, facing violent struggle all around, it becomes a powerful talisman: "We sure could do with some of that old magic now."

Winner of the Hindu Prize for Fiction 2015, Easterine Kire's *When the River Sleeps* published in 2014 is a story about Vilie, a 48-year-old lone hunter who has made forest his house. It combines Vilie's past and present life and two segments of life are remarkably shown with human spirit of love and longing. In the publisher note of Zubaan, Kire's novel transports the reader to the remote mountains of Nagaland, a place alive with natural wonder and supernatural enchantment. Her powerful narrative invites us into the lives and hearts of the people of Nagaland: the rituals and beliefs, their reverence for the land, their

close-knit communities – the rhythm of a life lived in harmony with their natural surroundings.

Kire's *Son of the Thundercloud*, published in 2016, is the winner of the Hindu Prize 2015 and Book of the year 2017. In the words of Atseinuo Sekhose , it can be stated that the novel is an allegorical novel set in a mystical land. A lone sojourner Pele leaves his village because of a terrible famine that sweeps across the land. His journey takes to a village called "Villagers of weavers" believed to be a safe heaven. Though the story unfolds through the eyes of Pele, there are many other characters who also serve as the author's mouthpiece. The dominant ones are the three divine sisters, Kethonuo, Siedze and Mesanuo, and the protagonist Rhalie. Kire finely weaves a lyrical storytelling with the magic and wisdom of Naga legends to produce an unforgettable, life-affirming table.

Don't Run, My Love published in 2017 is set in the background of Kija, an ancient village of the Angami Naga tribe. The novella portrays how 'their lives are hard – regulated by the seasons and by the ceaseless annual labours of hoeing, digging, planting and harvesting. But is also a life of peace, lived in a well-knit community of wise elders and caring - though sometimes overbearing – neighbours and relatives.' (Kire, 2017) In the daily The Hindu, R Krithika writes that Kire offers a portrait of life in a rural area: the rhythms of farming, how news spreads in a small community, the struggle to keep hunger at bay … all this and more is sketched with deft strokes and a light touch. Kevi, a young hunter, comes to village and the peace is shattered and falls in love with Atuonuo. Later he proposes marriage. Kire beautifully draws upon legend and a profound understanding of human nature by which an insight into the Naga life is set.

Kire's *a respectable woman* published in 2019 is a beautiful portrayal of memory which passes from mother to daughter and documents the history through the shared

memory. Radhdika Santhanam in her book review in the daily The Hindu writes that Easterine Kire's a respectable woman begins with a poignant line, which reminded me of the agony of that man. She writes: "It took my mother, Khonuo, exactly forty-five years before she could bring herself to talk about the war." This impactful sentence instantly provides the backdrop for Khonuo's story from the age of 10 – when the Japanese invaded the lush hills of Nagaland – to the birth of her daughter, Kevinuo,. Khonuo's tale forms the first section of the book. Khonuo recalls her family history, and through that she paints a picture of post-war Kohima. Her stories, which are essentially fragmented memories, "are without a beginning, a middle, and an end". Yet they come together like tiny pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, much like the broken lives of the people themselves.

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The proposed research foregrounds Easterine Kire's works, which can be distinctly classified into three segments of living – 1. Oral Narratives, 2. Naga as Society and Family, and 3. Changing of Nagas over the period as forced and as a choice. The present researcher will explore the gamut of socio-cultural manifestation of the Naga tribe and will convey the changing and reshaping *unified sensibility* of Angami Nagas and their cultural mosaic celebrated as a spirit of existential identity in the landscape through the works of Easterine Kire.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

No research can be held original or entirely new as T. S Eliot's dictum in *Tradition and Individual Talent: An Essay* goes "No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone" and the same is applicable to the researcher as well. Especially in humanities, a researcher reinterprets the interpreted, conceptualizing the gaps to be bridged, issues to be addressed, some things that have not been explored, or something that needs to be corrected or changed. Considering this fact, it is to be stated that significant research on Easterine Kire's

works seems to have been done in various universities of India, yet the proposed research will stand innovative in exploration as it completely focusses on the Naga tribe and their culture with their relevance in the past and the present, reflected in Kire's novels. To some extent the proposed research would be interdisciplinary in context with references of anthropology, history, religion and literature, and the present researcher would give justice to the title hypothesized for the proposed research. At the Shodhganga online portal, a reservoir of Indian thesis, the works on Easterine Kire are recorded as below:

1. Native Voices in the Works of Easterine Kire and Thomas King: A Comparative Study – by Patton, W. Meribeni, Nagaland University (2016)
2. Narrativization of the Historical and the Autobiographical: The Question of Tribal Identity in the Novels of Louise Erdrich and Easterine Kire – by Mepfhuo N., Assam Don Bosco University (2017)
3. Women's Predicament in the Select works of Easterine Kire, Temsula Ao, Indira Goswami and Mitra Phukan: A Feminist Reading – by Pongener, Watimongla, Nagaland University (2017)
4. English Novels in the Northeast of India: A Critical Analysis – by Borah Jintu, Gouhati University (2018)
5. Phenomenology of Alienation and Eco Ethics: A Study of N Scott Momaday Leslie Marmon Silko, Temsula Ao and Easterine Kire – by Emisenla Jamir, Nagaland University (2018)

4. OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

The objectives of the proposed research are as below:

1. To critically interpret the regional eco-habitat of Nagaland as reflected in the works of Easterine Kire

2. To critically discuss the history and social background of the Angami Naga Tribe, reflected in the works.
3. To critically enunciate the culture and tradition of Angami Nagas with an impact to their day-to-day life, thoughts and ideas with a motto 'to live and let live'. (Spirit of Animism)
4. To critically analyse their ethnicity, myths and legends, which unite them as 'togetherness of communal identity'.
5. To critically explore how the impact of Christianity and modernity has changed their generations and how they want to celebrate their past in tune with modernity.
6. To critically conclude the works of Easterine Kire with significance, challenges, universality and existential identity.

5. HYPOTHESIS

An identity of a community has not a separate entity devoid of the physical environment. Ecology has a significant role in stimulating and stabilizing imagination of the people living in the surroundings. The Angami Naga tribe represented in the works of Easterine Kire has their *ethnoscape* and *mythoscape* frame of living in the *landscape*, which underlines their distinct culture and tradition. The proposed research intends to explore and interpret such ways of living of the Angami Naga tribe, signifying value system of social, political, economic and cultural interconnectedness and universal appeal with progressive modern values of liberty, fraternity and equality.

6. DATA, SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

Proposed research shall be entirely descriptive in nature, using primary and secondary sources as basis of textual-interpretations. It aims to study the works of Easterine Kire with critical analyses of the novels as texts, justifying the hypothesis and objectives. The proposed research will bring out an eco-socio-cultural dimension of Naga tribe following the principles

of literary research. The scope of this proposed research will be significant in academia with its source of information about the Naga tribe and their fascinating culture. It will enhance a perception of scholars and researchers to find the gaps for further exploration and academic engagement. It will also invite the comparative approach in the area. The scope will pave a way to interdisciplinary approach in context with anthropology, linguistics, economics, sociology and other disciplines. Since this will be descriptive and literary research based on textual interpretations, the present researcher will limit his arguments and descriptions to textual analysis based on primary and secondary sources towards objectives and hypothesis for the proposed title.

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research is a process of exploring and widening understanding, with validated arguments and relevant enquiry of spirit into the text, with the secondary sources to support the interpretation and analysis. Being descriptive and textual analyses, the proposed research will be qualitative in nature, using and citing quotes, web sources, images, opinions, remarks, definitions from primary and secondary sources with critical and theoretical approach in support of the objectives and hypothesis for the proposed research. The guidelines and formats directed by university and the latest edition of MLA for writing thesis in literature shall be strictly followed.

8. JUSTIFICATION OF RESEARCH

Literature through different genres has been instrumental in changing and educating the society across the world from the time immemorial, and enriched the imagination and thoughts of the readers. Thus, the proposed research will open up a creative perspective to look at the Naga tribe and bring out a unique identity of the tribe reflected in the works of the novelist. It will also touch the arguments stating how the Naga people have changed themselves in the course of time and how they are nostalgic for their identity. As a socio-cultural foregrounding,

this will generate a critical thinking with gaps to be bridged and addressed following theoretical interpretations based on Poststructuralism, Cultural Studies and Eco criticism.

9. PEDOGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Literature has always been a very significant medium to portray 'being' and 'being' with changing spirit of taste, creativity, intellectuality and expression as an outburst of 'recollected tranquillity', with aesthetics and form and as a revolt and reformist for identity and change respectively. India is a country of diversified cultures and through literatures such diversities of the people have surfaced a sense of beauty and unique ways of living with their food habits, dressing manners, festivals, livelihoods, languages and their arts and cultures, symbolizing an ethnic mosaic of beauty in the heart and mind of the people of India. Writings in regional languages and in English in India have demonstrated Indian psyche of collective but separate memory of conflict, of marginalized, of revolt and of modernity. With this, the proposed research will establish and cater a new dimension and discussion, representing the eco-cultural habitat of Nagaland. This exploration will add an amount of knowledge to the field of literature in particular and to the Indian society in general and will pave way for further study. The research will widen an understanding about the Angami Naga tribe in the academics, centring their democratic views, liberal policies, socio-cultural engagement and most importantly their unique ways of living. This will contribute to bring the region and the people living there in the mainstream of India.

10. TENTATIVE CHAPTER SCHEME

SR. NO.	CHAPTER	TITLE OF THE CHAPTER
1.	CHAPTER **I**	INTRODUCTION
2.	CHAPTER **II**	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAGA MYTHS AND LEGENDS IN THE WORKS OF EASTERINE KIRE

3.	CHAPTER **III**	PORTRAYAL OF THE 'SELF' AND THE COMMUNITY IN THE WORKS OF EASTERINE KIRE
4.	CHAPTER **IV**	REFLECTIONS OF A NEW CULTURE AND TRADITON OF THE NAGA TRIBE IN EASTERINE KIRE'S WORKS
5.	CHAPTER **V**	CONCLUSION

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The first chapter will introduce the geographical significance of the Northeast region of India, the state of Nagaland and the major tribes inhabiting in the region and the eminent writers of the region with their literary endeavours. It will be discussing eco-socio and historical background of the Naga tribe.

Further, the discussion will be initiated on Easterine Kire as a writer and her writings with her cult and thematic foregrounding in *Sky Is My Father: A Naga Village Remembered* (2003), *A Terrible Matriarchy (2007), Bitter Wormwood (2011), When the River Sleeps (2014), Son of the Thundercloud (2016), Don't Run My Love (2017),* and *a respectable woman (2019)*

CHAPTER II: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAGA MYTHS AND LEGENDS IN THE WORKS OF EASTERINE KIRE

The second chapter will critically discuss the myths and legends of the Angami Nagas represented and reflected in the works of Easterine Kire. Distinctly, their animism, rituals and rites, their notions of life and death, and the role of spirit and supernatural power as a collective memory will be interpreted through their stories of oral narratives in the works.

The literary engagement about the Naga tribe by various writers from the state of Nagaland goes back to the rich oral tradition of different tribes inhabiting in the state. Their oral expressions in the form of folk tales, folk songs, legends and myths associated with festivals, harvesting and day-to-day social life mark their unique identity. All these oral

traditions have united them as Naga identity. Though changes in various way have been in the life of the Naga people and in the region, they are firmly grounded in their tradition and socio-cultural engagement. It is only their oral tradition which kept them rooted in their treasure of knowledge and belief systems from one generation to other with their customary laws, fables, tales of supernatural, tales of their origin, legends and folk dances. Dr Payel Dutta Chowdhury refers to M. Horam's quotes in her book *The Nagas: Social and Cultural Identity – Texts and Contexts* (2020) about the oral tradition that 'the family bard usually grandfather or the father must pass on the repository of community knowledge before he dies.' And, for the written treasure of traditions, the credit goes to Temsula Ao and Easterine Kire for preserving and cherishing their oral traditions in various literary genres. Kire's novels are imbibed with the myths, rituals and beliefs of the Naga tribe. In *Where the River Sleeps* (2014), Vilie's journey in search of a river of his dreams beautifully surfaces various myths and rituals which clearly bring alive the oral tradition of Nagaland. Kire's *Don't Run, My Love (2017)* focuses a journey of knowledge from mother to daughter which hover around the belief in weretigers, bringing to the notice of the readers how belief systems functions in the tribe. The narratives of religion, gods and *genna* form indigenous ways of living of the Angami Naga. The role of mother earth as birth spirit in the life of these people conveys us how they are fearful and how they take efforts for the harmony. Pele, the protagonist, in *Son of the Thundercloud* (2016) expresses his reverence for the river as the "source of life for the village and "… call her our mother because she gives us food: fish, frogs, herbs and water." (p. 54, 55) As per their belief system, the dwelling of a Tsungrem (God) is dwelt in all objects of Nature, that's why Angami religion is animistic. Along Tsungrem (the Stone God) has a great role in the life of these people. The belief system of the Naga about *genna* is interesting the way they observe strictly in their festivals and celebrations. Various rituals from birth to death, marriage rituals and head-hunting beliefs and rituals have integral role in the life of Naga community.

CHAPTER III: PORTRAYAL OF THE 'SELF' AND THE COMMUNITY IN THE WORKS OF EASTERINE KIRE

The third chapter will critically discuss the individual's position in the family, women's status, community role and function among the Nagas, based on the Angami Naga characters, family system, their relations in the family and the society and their making of a community reflected and represented in the works of Easterine Kire.

Their inherent beliefs form their conceptualizations and an approach towards their living conditions, paving a way to their worships, celebrations and community participation. Morungs meaning village community houses of the Naga tribe have a significant role in preserving their culture and training their children or youths for the unification of cultural symbolism in their socio-cultural life. Morungs also called dormitories have psychological shaping of interpretative community of collective consciousness. Their community dormitories for unmarried boys and girls are the centres of training, where they select life partners and have an exuberance of genders' skills and potentials. As per decided by the community and after completion of particular age of boys and girls, they are instructed to go to their respective dormitories for sleeping at night. This psychological and social freedom make them a leader, a leader of taking decisions of their life, and looking at life from their own perspectives. This idea of inculcating brotherhood and fellow-feelings seems to be fascinating and inviting.

Performances of story-telling, songs and dances at the community houses or during the festivals, social events and other gatherings direct girls and boys to know and follow their belief systems. Individual involvement in the community life conveys the reader their role for the community discipline, honesty and integrity and how and what community means to them. Their engagement in various preparations like "preparation of fences for village defence, making the log-drum, and preparations for important festivals, as well as, creating a support system for the domestic life of every member of the community." (Chowdhury, 2020, p.1,2)

Family system is very unique and interdependent as they do not follow joint family system as we find in other cultures of India.

Village administration is another feature of the Naga tribe. This is a uniting force of the community where they get redressal of their family and social issues, instructions for their social conduct and proper guidance for specific requirement. All subjects or issues including social, cultural, religious, issues related to money and farming, allotment of land for cultivation and space for living. While administering law and justice and dealing with all such social and communal administration, they are fully democratic and fair following equality, fraternity and liberty, not to say barbaric and uncivilized. The Angami Nagas have no village chiefs or elected village council, but all the villagers come together for their disputes and after consensus their decision is finalized and dispute is settled amicably and fairly.

Head-hunting and wars feature the Angamis for their community life and involvement, inviting their capability and strength, so that they should not be defeated by the enemies. They are trained in the dormitories for how they have to be fearless and how they have to follow their community codes during the wars. Those who are not able to mark their ability or strength are ridiculed by the community. Accordingly, they develop and master the art of using weapons and their traditional skills and strategies to defeat their enemies and to kill the dangerous animals. The Nagas head-hunting skills are widely known in the world.

Festivals and celebrations are associated with their life-leading conditions and community participation. Eating, drinking, singing, dancing and several other sports have great relevance in their participatory exuberance during festivals and events. All these festivals and celebrations have soothing effects on their socio-psychological engagement as they feel relaxed, and have rest from their day-to-day labours. Also, they worship and invite their deities related to agricultural activities and seek blessings through such performances. Drinking wine

and rice beer with their traditional delicacies are of great significance. Moatsu, Mong and Tsungrem Mong are their major religious festivals.

The interpretation about the status of the Naga women are varied as they have patriarchal lineage. In some context the Naga women appear to have complete freedom for their liking and disliking, and at other context they are not allowed to participate in so called men's affairs. In *Sky Is My Father* (2003), when Kovi's wife asks her husband why Doniu, a clansman, was asking about Kovi. To her reply Kovi tersely says, 'It's man-talk. Don't ask after the business of the clan, woman.' (p.3)

CHAPTER IV: REFLECTIONS OF A NEW CULTURE AND TRADITON OF THE NAGA TRIBE IN EASTERINE KIRE'S WORKS

The fourth chapter will critically analyse and interpret how Colonization, Christianity, education, urbanization and government policies etc. brought in a measurable change in the Naga indigenous culture and tradition, how the noted change has impacted their ways of living, worshipping and thinking represented and reflected in the works of Easterine Kire.

When the British came to the region, they brought with them their intent in the form of missionaries to spread Christianity, education and ways of living. This has impacted the life of the Nagas remarkably as most of the people from the region accepted this new religion and brought a significant change in the life of these people. Change has been so drastic that they started losing their indigenous culture. Christianity and western education set the modernity in the region, with changing their fashion, language and their imagination for the new life. Obviously, this has resulted in deteriorating their old aged cultures, traditions and a strong belief system. Somewhere they became flexible in their observance, attachment and engagement. They discarded their several socio-cultural aspects, learning process and community centres where they were given training, in preferences of modern education. Morungs , dormitories for boys and girls had a great role in shaping the communal psyche of youths, but this shift brought a clash between the traditional learning centres and the modern

centres of education. They were exposed to the western philosophies and English language for their future leading ideological framework of living and loving. Modern education proved them a need-based acceptance as they wanted to go with the flow of modernity and the globalization has made them aware for their survival and future generations. Instead of going to their village gatherings or meeting, they started to going and attending the churches meetings and religious worships. Their socio-cultural and ethnic symbols and respect to their past, to some extents, have changed. A shift from the past to the present is a shift of a change and rejection of their past. Their old cherished activities were considered as barbaric and treated as criminal. Interreference of church in the life of the Naga became remarkable in context with social functions, marriages and funerals. Moreover, for their academic pursuits and in search of jobs, their children migrated to other cities of India and abroad and some people have shifted for their livelihood. The Nagas were animist and they worshiped various objects in the Nature. As a result, they had their traditional knowledge of herbs and medicine to cure various diseases. Now, they are dependent on modern medical procedures and medicines. As Dr. Payel Dutta Chowdhury strikingly shows the impact in The Nagas (2020) that this brought about a decline in the oral tradition of the Naga tribes and the practice of community-based story-telling activities, songs, dances and celebrations during various festivals also underwent several changes. (p.200)

Thus, conversion into new religions, modern education, job opportunities, technological advancement and globalization have brought a new culture in the region, though the Nagas have started balancing their present with the fascinating past in context to festivals, delicacies, food habits and marriage rituals.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

The fifth and the last chapter will have a conclusive discussion and summarized arguments based on works of *Kire's Sky Is My Father: A Naga Village Remembered* (2003) , *A Terrible Matriarchy (2007), Bitter Wormwood (2011), When the River Sleeps (2014), Son of*

the Thundercloud (2016), Don't Run My Love (2017), a respectable woman (2019), following the preceding chapters. The focus will have on their indigenous culture and relevance that the Naga tribe stands as a unified whole and how the shift from the past to the present created a new culture. A critical analysis of their psyche whether it disturbs them for their lost of cultural treasure, whether they want to go back to their old aged celebrated past or whether they have a progressive imagination for community's upliftment and engagement will be conceptualized to establish a socio-cultural dimension and existence of the Naga tribe.

An argument based on overall thematic concern and propositions will be deliberated and concluded.

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